BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
OUR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES
Choosing which course to study at university, and which university to study at, is a big decision. Biology itself is a huge subject and there are lots of courses to choose from which can make this decision even harder.

**WHY READING?**

The University of Reading is a leading centre for Biological Sciences, providing a range of excellent degree programmes, and is an exciting, friendly place to study. We offer six undergraduate programmes – BSc Biochemistry, BSc Biological Sciences, BSc Biomedical Sciences, BSc Ecology & Wildlife Conservation, BSc Microbiology and BSc Zoology – as well as MSc and PhD post-graduate programmes. So whatever your own interests and passions are, we have a course to suit you.

Our overall objective at Reading is to further our understanding of life and to communicate this biological knowledge so as to inspire and inform successive generations of graduates. The School of Biological Sciences has more than 50 full-time academic staff who are experts in a wide range of biological science subjects including biomedical researchers who advance knowledge which underpins health and evolutionary ecologists who enable better understanding of the natural world and how it can be conserved. We have world-renowned research strength in understanding of ecological and evolutionary processes, transmission and biology of flu virus, cardiovascular and metabolic research, statistical training and research, wildlife-management and conservation and floral biodiversity. While studying at the University of Reading you will be able to be part of this ongoing research as all of our students have an opportunity to do a final year research project. You will also be able to personalise your degree, with a wide selection of modules to choose from and the option to study abroad or do a placement year. We provide plenty of careers support and all of our courses are designed to develop the skills that employers value, so that by the time you graduate you will not only be able to look back at the wonderful experiences you’ve had, you’ll also be able to look forward to starting your dream career.

**UNISTATS AT A GLANCE**

- On average, 90% of our students have been satisfied with the quality of our courses over the past few years.
OUR DEGREE PROGRAMMES

- BSc Biochemistry C700 3 years full-time
- BSc Biological Sciences C100 3 years full-time
- BSc Biological Sciences with Industrial Experience C101 4 years full-time
- BSc Biomedical Sciences C740 3 years full-time
- BSc Ecology & Wildlife Conservation C904 3 years full-time
- BSc Microbiology C300 3 years full-time
- BSc Zoology C300 3 years full-time

All degrees have an optional sandwich year.

CONTACT
sbsadmissions@reading.ac.uk
Tel: 0118 378 5393
BSC BIOCHEMISTRY

Biochemistry focuses on the molecular basis of life. This degree programme teaches you how inanimate, lifeless chemicals combine to produce living organisms. It provides the most detailed account of how we, and all other life-forms, function. Join us and discover what makes life tick at the molecular level. We will equip you with laboratory and research skills in biochemistry and will enhance your analytical and investigative abilities.

This course has a strong practical element and you will experience key techniques including DNA manipulation, isolation of biomolecules, immunoassays, spectroscopy and bioinformatics. In your final year, you will also have the opportunity to contribute to one of the many cutting-edge research projects in the school. Students will also develop their transferable skills throughout the degree, including how to design and execute experiments, the use of computers to access information resources, the use of statistical programmes for data analysis, individual and group communication skills in written work and oral and poster presentations, as well as the development of critical reading skills.

WHY READING?

Biochemistry at the University of Reading prides itself on giving you more laboratory experience (which employers value) than many universities. Emphasis is placed on you being able to choose, as the course proceeds, those aspects of biochemistry that you find most rewarding.

The Biochemistry course we offer will enable you to learn how genes work and how proteins function and you will learn about all the biomolecules from which cells are composed. You will discover how cells are organised, how they grow and divide and the diverse ways in which energy is obtained. You will study microbes, plants and animals—you will learn how they differ, but also how they are related and how they share many of the basic principles upon which all life depends. We will teach you how diseases are caused, how diseases perturb normal biochemical processes and, importantly, how disease can be countered.

More specifically at the University of Reading we specialise in the biochemistry of disease, with the aim of understanding what goes wrong in major diseases, such as cancer and coronary heart disease, at the level of cells and molecules and how drugs and other treatments work in detail. We are a research-intensive university which offers you an extensive final year research project in one of our active research laboratories using cutting-edge ideas and equipment. Not many other universities, even the research-intensive ones, offer you this.

Our BSc Biochemistry degree is recognised by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/biosci-ugbscbiochemistry.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.
WHY READING?

The BSc Biological Sciences programme is our most flexible degree course and we believe it is the most flexible Biology programme in the country. Designed for students who have broad interests or who want to keep their options open, this course has only a small number of compulsory modules and offers exceptional choice and variety of optional modules. You will be able to experience the whole breadth of biology if you wish or you can specialise in a particular area of biology such as human biology or in ecology and wildlife depending on your own interests.

We believe that this freedom of choice allows you to personalise your degree and create your own journey through biology, creating a rich and fulfilling experience that will allow you to reach your full potential at university.

The School of Biological Sciences is staffed by a very diverse group of academics who have expertise ranging from zoology to biochemistry. Our modules are taught by experts in the field; our academics are internationally recognised for their research.

Because of the breadth of subjects covered at the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Reading, our students have access to a range of world-class teaching and research facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/biosci-ugbsc理科生物科学.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.

BSC BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES C100

BSc Biological Sciences covers all aspects of the study of living organisms from micro-organisms, such as viruses and bacteria, to multicellular organisms, such as flowering plants, animals and humans and their interactions in ecosystems and habitats. Biological Sciences covers all levels of biological organisation allowing you to study the molecules of life in biochemistry through to the extraordinary complexity of the human body and its health and disease. You can learn about whole organism physiology, study communities through ecology and environmental biology and explore issues in wildlife conservation. It is our broadest and most flexible degree programme.

We will foster and widen your biological interests and give you a thorough scientific training. You will be able to investigate and understand biology more fully, and be able to use transferable skills to deal with different opportunities in a more objective and analytical way.

Individual modules contain lectures, practical classes, field work, interactive discussion sessions and tutorials. There are field courses and other options for fieldwork throughout the programme. Research skills are developed throughout but especially through a substantial research project in the final year. A major emphasis is given to developing transferable skills including computer literacy, information retrieval, data handling and communication skills.
**BSC BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES C741**

Biomedical Sciences is the application of biology-based science to medical use, be it research, health monitoring or treatment. If your main interest in Biology has to do with the human body and with how biological research relates to the development of the medical field then a degree in Biomedical Sciences could be for you. During the course you will learn how the human body functions in both health and disease, so it is essential that you have an innate curiosity and interest in how the human body works and also the medical issues that arise when it goes wrong. Practical skills are a crucial component of the course so you need to be willing and able to engage in hands-on lab based classes.

You will begin your course by studying the basic biological systems that underpin all life from a cellular, tissue, organ and whole body perspective. From this fundamental knowledge, we will teach you about the diseases that result when these systems go wrong, such as coronary heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease as well as the diseases that are caused by the vast array of infectious organisms that we are exposed to everyday. You will also learn about the amazing mechanisms by which the body is able to combat disease. The flexible, modular structure of our courses maximises student choice so that you can tailor your degree to your personal interests. Modules are taught by experts; our academics are internationally recognised for their research in fields as diverse as cardiovascular disease, cancer, cell signalling, endocrinology, virology and bacteriology. In your final year, we also offer every student the opportunity to undertake an 11 week practical based research project on topics as diverse as SARS, HIV, influenza, heart disease, breast cancer and obesity.

The School of Biological Sciences has long standing links with the Royal Berkshire Hospital and some teaching will be delivered by practising NHS laboratory scientists who have helped to develop this programme. The BSc Biomedical Sciences degree programme at the University of Reading is also accredited with the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/bioci-ugbscbiomedicalsciences.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.

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**PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

Practical skills are a crucial component of the course. You will gain experience in a wide range of cellular, molecular and biochemical techniques including DNA and protein technology, live cell microscopy and analytical methods. Throughout the duration of the course, our degrees also build your transferable skills including the ability to design and execute experiments in the laboratory, work in a team, access information, interpret data using statistics and computing and write essays, scientific papers and reports.
Ecology and Wildlife Conservation are exciting subjects full of interesting and highly motivated people. Ecologists study the interactions between organisms and their environment. These interactions can occur at scales that vary from whole biomes (global patterns of biodiversity) down to the level of DNA (How do organisms evolve in response to natural and human-induced selection?). This degree will provide you with the knowledge and skills required for a career in Ecology or Wildlife Conservation.

Our aim is to equip students with fundamental insights into the natural world around us and then show how we can apply these perspectives to some of our most pressing problems. These global challenges range from the biological control of pests and diseases, to the protection and survival of the World’s rarest species. Students will gain considerable field experience both on campus and on field courses in Spain or the tropics, providing them with basic skills in species identification and the design of ecological experiments in a range of fascinating habitats. We also carry out a lot of research into wildlife, its ecology and conservation, so our teaching is strongly research-led. Where Reading is unique is the effort that is being made to engage students in genuine novel research that leads to publication in peer reviewed scientific journals.

At Reading we are very experienced in training students for employment as ecologists and conservationists, through both our undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. The approach we take at postgraduate level has been remarkably successful with over 90% employment rate in ecology and wildlife conservation. We are very proud of this and are now applying this approach to undergraduate training with a strong focus on vocational skills and employability. We offer an exciting, flexible and targeted degree programme but alongside this we encourage students to develop their skills, CVs and professionalism through extra-curricular activities as well as within scheduled modules. This involves increased engagement with academic staff and employers within the relevant sectors.

All our graduates in Ecology & Wildlife Conservation are eligible for membership of the Institute of Biology and Chartered Biologist status.

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working in the laboratory and in the field, and use of information technology, and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum. Students will also gain experience in the methodology of research and scholarship.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/biosci-bssecwlc.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.
WHY READING?

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

BSC MICROBIOLOGY C500

Although microbes are relatively simple organisms they are one of the most dominant life forms on the planet. Some cause disease, whilst others are crucial for life. We have also learnt to exploit microbes for our own benefit. This is a modern degree for a modern world that can teach you about the diverse world of microbes: bacteria, archaea, viruses, fungi and protozoa. You will learn the fundamental properties, genetics and physiology of these microbes, underpinned by knowledge of the host cell biology and immune system.

The Microbiology section of the School of Biological Sciences is derived from the first Microbiology department in the UK, established at the University of Reading in 1952. This long history of excellence in Microbiology ensures that our staff are internationally recognised for their research, with particular strengths in Virology and Bacteriology and that your BSc Microbiology programme will be well respected by future employers.

The aim of our Microbiology degree programme is to provide a strong biological science platform, with a thorough understanding of the subject of Microbiology and practical experience in a wide range of microbiological techniques. The course is designed to maximise choice so that you can focus on those aspects of the subject that most interest you, such as Medical Microbiology, Environmental Microbiology or Food Microbiology.

Our Microbiology programme has a strong practical emphasis. You will gain practical experience of a wide range of microbiological techniques such as microbial genetics, DNA technology, aseptic technique, microbial isolation, propagation and identification and biochemistry. You will also gain experience of cutting edge microbiological research by carrying out a two term research project in the final year and there are opportunities for funded summer studentships within the School.

Our degrees also incorporate key transferable skills which provides our graduates with maximum flexibility for employment in both science and most other non-science job sectors. You will learn how to design and execute experiments, how to work in a team, access information, interpret data using statistics and computing and write essays and reports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/biosc-ugbscmicrobiology.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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BSC ZOOLOGY C300

Zoology is the science of animals at all levels, from the sub-cellular through to the ecology of the animal world. It is a fascinating, challenging and diverse subject that includes taxonomy, physiology, genetics, behaviour, evolution, biodiversity and conservation.

WHY READING?

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Our course emphasises a mix of modern molecular laboratory expertise, practical field skills and traditional taxonomy. You will therefore gain expertise in a wide range of techniques, ranging from molecular genetics through to field-based studies of ecology and animal behaviour. We emphasise the need for field skills and all zoologists take modules that teach skills in animal identification, surveying and methods of trapping.

Our Zoology degree will also develop your transferable skills in career management, communication, presentation skills, information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working in the laboratory and in the field and the use of information technology. You will also be able to design and execute experiments and write essays, scientific papers and reports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/biosci-ugbsczoology.aspx for more information on the course, including details on modules offered and entry requirements.

Here at Reading we offer a true Zoology degree, there’s no shared first year with other subjects – you will study Zoology from day one. We particularly emphasise field studies and field skills, so you will gain extensive experience of field work, and develop skills in experimental design. We can make fieldwork a large and integral component of our modules, rather than an occasional treat, because we are based on the Whiteknights campus, a beautiful award-winning green space 1.3 square kilometres in size that doubles as our own on-site field centre. The School of Biological Sciences is also the home of the Cole Museum of Zoology, a fantastic educational resource run with the help of student volunteers. The Cole Museum has thousands of specimens from throughout the animal kingdom, and a new collection of animal fossils.

In your first year you will develop a broad understanding of the most important processes in Zoology, how animals work at the level of genes and cells, and how evolution explains animal adaptation and diversity. Our tutorial system backs up the modules with personalised small-group learning. A residential field course in the UK or abroad kicks off your second year, during which you will develop a rigorous understanding of physiology, anatomy and behaviour of the major animal groups. By the third year our teaching connects with the cutting-edge research of our academic staff. Module choices include Forensic Zoology, Conservation Biology, Urban Ecology and other exciting specialist topics in which you will learn to apply your knowledge to new problems and hone your critical thinking skills. All students undertake a research project in their final year. For many students this is the highlight of their degree, as they are able to focus on a topic that fascinates them and make a genuine contribution to zoology research.
All of the buildings in the School of Biological Sciences are located on the beautiful Whiteknights Campus. Possibly the best university campus in the country, Whiteknights covers 1.3 square kilometres or just over 320 acres. The walk around the edge of the campus is 4.5 kilometres long.

Located on this large campus are most of the halls of residence, the students union, the library, lecture theatres and all of the lab facilities that you will use during your studies.

The Hopkins Building (below) houses teaching and research space for the School of Biological Sciences. The School of Biological Sciences also benefits from the facilities at the Cole Museum of Zoology (right) housed on Whiteknights campus.

The campus contains woodland, a lake, meadows, a botanical garden and parkland and has received a prestigious Green Flag award as recognition as one of the best green spaces in the country. There is also a wonderful array of wildlife on campus, with biodiversity surveys recording over 1000 species. You can learn all about the campus biodiversity on the Whiteknights Biodiversity blog: blogs.reading.ac.uk/whiteknightsbiodiversity

Our remarkable campus is a major benefit to students studying ecology or wildlife topics as you can learn many important field skills without leaving campus. In addition to the campus we have a wide range of facilities in the School of Biological Sciences that will greatly enhance your degree. Facilities include the Cole Museum of Zoology which contains over 3,500 specimens, the herbarium which contains around 300,000 specimens of plants, imaging facilities that contain electron microscopes, super-resolution microscopes and laser scanning confocal microscopes, state-of-the-art teaching labs and cutting edge research facilities.

Located in the heart of possibly the best university campus in the UK, the School of Biological Sciences is renowned for its cutting edge facilities in both teaching and research.
Field work is a major and essential component of many of our degree programmes including BSc Zoology, BSc Ecology & Wildlife Conservation and BSc Biological Sciences. While we are fortunate that many field skills can be developed on-site on our beautiful green campus, residential field courses in locations of biological significance enhance and build on these field skills and allow you to further develop skills such as species identification, mammal trapping, bird ringing, bat watching and dormouse monitoring.

We run field courses in the second and third year both in the UK and overseas. Examples of recent field courses include Zoology Field Courses in Devon and East Sussex, a Tropical Biology Field Course in Madagascar and a Biodiversity Field Course in Spain.

**Arctic Microbiology Field Course**
Uniquely, we also offer an Arctic Microbiology Field Course to Iceland for students with an interest in microbiology. We travel to Northern Iceland to gain skills in microbiology and to examine the unusual microbes that inhabit extreme environments, such as glacial rivers and volcanic geothermal areas. Students learn field-based sampling techniques, analyse those samples back in the lab and learn about the microbial biodiversity in the Arctic and how it is changing.

**Tropical Biology Field Course**
Our Tropical Biology Field Course is very popular with our Zoology students. We have recently been visiting Madagascar but have been to other tropical regions such as Borneo. In Madagascar students were able to see many different habitats from the tropical rainforests of Ifaty and the dry central highlands. They also got to see many amazing species, including lemurs, chameleons, some rare endemic birds, and many fascinating insects, including the giraffe necked weevil.

**Biodiversity Field Course**
The Biodiversity Field Course introduces students to the extraordinary diversity of organisms and helps them understand diversity as a living puzzle: how such different organisms can interact with each other, or with the environment, and how humans impact on their habitat and environment. The field course takes place in Spain, in the coastal area of Andalucia and involves walks to find and sample organisms on the beach and hills surrounding the town, most of which are local natural reserves. Further identification and analysis of the material will be performed in the lab.
Dr. Sam Boateng of the ICMR is funded by the BHF to conduct research into the mechanisms of heart failure, and as such is one of five leading academics who feature in the campaign, which includes a number of television adverts.

We take pride in offering all students the opportunity to do a research project in their final year. This is a very important part of your degree in which you will spend 11 weeks in the lab or the field conducting an original research project. This is often student’s favourite part of the course and it highly valued by employers as it develops qualities such as initiative, independence, data collection and analysis.

The types of projects you can do are many and varied. You can work in the lab or in the field, on a biomedical project, or an ecology project. You can also work on existing data sets, media, outreach and education projects. You can even work overseas. For example we currently offered several students the opportunity to carry out their project work in South Africa on topics such as leopard conservation. In many cases the results from the research projects are published in scientific journals with the students as authors.

During your research project you will work alongside academics and other scientists as part of a research group. You can find details of the research that we perform at the School of Biological Sciences on our website: www.reading.ac.uk/biosci-res.aspx and this will give you an idea of the type of projects that you can be involved with in your final year.

**Examples of undergraduate projects:**

- Mechanisms of bacterial pathogenicity and host colonisation
- The molecular engineering of viruses
- The role of cell movement in the spread of cancer
- The control of signalling in platelets during blood clotting
- Gene therapy for muscular dystrophies
- Development and regeneration of skeletal muscle
- Urban ecology of mammals
- Phylogenetics of medicinal plants
- Effect of climate change on species distribution
- Ectoparasites of humans and other mammals
- Evolution of the genetic code and genome size
- Evolution of human altruism
PLACEMENTS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Gaining work experience can be an important part of your degree and is highly valued by employers. There are a number of ways in which you can gain this experience including placement modules, paid summer vacation research experience and a placement year.

Placement year
All of our degrees offer you the opportunity to do a placement year or a year in industry at the end of the second year and allow you to gain a whole year’s experience working for an employer. Recently our students have done placements at companies and organisations as diverse as GlaxoSmithKline, Ipsen Pharmaceuticals, Kew Gardens, Diamond Light Source and Rothamsted Research. During your placement year you will still be part of the university and will have regular contact with a dedicated academic who oversees the placements. While we have a dedicated 4-year programme (BSc Biological Sciences with a Year in Industry C101) you can apply for any of our degree courses and you will be able to do a placement year – you don’t have to decide until the start of your second year, so you have plenty of time to think about it!

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme
If you are thinking about a career in research then the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) is an ideal way to gain some invaluable research experience. UROP placements provide exciting opportunities for undergraduates to work with academic staff on research projects across the University, contributing directly to the creation of knowledge and strengthening the link between teaching and research. These paid placements last six weeks over the summer break, or can be part-time over a longer period.

Placement module
Not everyone wants to do a placement for a whole year so we have recently introduced a new 10-credit placement module. In this second year module you will be able to gain work experience over a shorter period of time, such as over the summer or throughout a term, and get credit towards your degree as well as relevant work experience.

STUDYING ABROAD

The School of Biological Sciences offers students the opportunity to spend part of their course at an overseas University. Reading students are able to study at one of our University-wide exchange partners in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia or Japan, or with one of the School’s Erasmus partners, currently the University of Zaragoza, Spain and University of Akureyri, Iceland. Our students are able to apply for financial support from the EU for the duration of European exchange placements.

Placements can be arranged either for a term or a whole year with students undertaking research projects and in some instances can take taught modules. Studying abroad offers a number of opportunities that can strengthen a graduate’s CV, improving their chances in the job market:

- Come into contact with a foreign culture
- Develop spoken and written language skills
- Take courses on topics that are not covered in as much detail in Reading
- Develop organisational skills
- Increased self-confidence
- Improved chances on the international job market
Example careers:
- Biomedical Scientist in an NHS hospital
- Research scientist
- Further study for an MSc or PhD
- Conservation Biology
- Teaching
- Ecological consultancy
- Postgraduate medicine or dentistry
- Scientific sales and technical support
- Scientific communication and medical writing

**CAREERS**

No matter which degree you choose, studying at the School of Biological Sciences opens up a varied and exciting range of careers.

To help our students find the right career for them, we have recently introduced a dedicated careers and professional development module in the second year. During this module, you will learn about the wide range of careers open to you and what you need to do in order to prepare yourself for job applications. To do this, we invite back our recent graduates to talk to you. Our graduates have gone on to be successful in all of the careers our students are interested in, and they provide important insights into the day-to-day life in the career and key tips for improving your job applications.
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AT READING

For more information, please contact:
sbsadmissions@reading.ac.uk
Tel (0118) 378 5393
@readingbiosci
biologicalsciences
www.reading.ac.uk/biologicalsciences

Cole Museum of Zoology:
www.reading.ac.uk/colemuseum
Herbarium:
www.reading.ac.uk/herbarium
Centre for Wildlife Assessment & Conservation:
www.reading.ac.uk/cwac
Whiteknights Biodiversity blog:
blogs.reading.ac.uk/whiteknightsbiodiversity

Careers in Biological Sciences:
www.reading.ac.uk/biosci_careers.aspx